or seemed to care where—and in less than ten minutes from the time that they had returned from the deor the hush of sleep

returned from the deer the host of sleep and rest seemed to possess the whole house. There was no light but that of the fire in the front room, which threw flickering and gigantic shadows on the walls of the three empty chairs before it. An hour later it

compty chairs before it. An noir later it seemed as if one of the chairs were occupied, and a grotesque profile of Collason's slumberlog—of meditating—face and figure was projected grimly on the rafters as though it were the hovering guardian spirit of the house. But even that passed presently and faded out, and the beleaguer-ing discusses they have been considered.

Author of the "Luck of Roaring Camp," "Two Men of Sandy Bar," &c.

Copyright, 1895, by Bret Harte CHAPTER I. It was very dark, and the wind was increasing. The last gust had been preceded by an ominous roaring down the whole mountain side, which continued for some time after the trees in the little valley

had lapsed into silence. The air was filled with a faint, cool, sodden odor-as of stirred forest depths. In those intervals of silence the darkness seemed to increase in proportion and grow almost parpable. Yet out of this sightless and soundless void w came the tinkle of a spur's rowels the dry cracking of saddle leathers, and the muffled plunge of a hoof in the thick carpet of dust and desiconted leaves. Then a voice, which, in spite of its matterof-fact reality, the obscurity lent a certain mystery to, said:

mystery to, saud.
"I can't make out anything? Where the
deril have we got to, anyway? It's as
black as Tophet here ahead?"

"Strike a light and make a flare with something," returned a second voice. "Look where you're shoving to-now-keep your horse off, will ye?" There was more muffled plunging, a st-

lence, the rustle of paper, the quick spurt of a match, and then the uplifting of a flickering flame. But it revealed only the heads and shoulders of three horsemen that still left their horses and even their lowerfigures inimpenetrable shadow. Then the flame leaped up and died out with a few rigzagging sparks that were falling to the ground, when a third voice—that was lose but somewhat pleasant in its cadence-

"Be careful where you throw that. You were careless last time. With this wind a furnace blast through the woods,"
"Then at least we'd see where we were."

Nevertheless he moved his horse, whose trampling hoofs beat out the last fallen spark. Complete darkness and rilence followed. Presently the first speaker con-

"I reckon we'll have to wait here till the next squatt clears away the send from the sky. Hellot. What's that?" . . .

Out of the obscurity before them appeared a faint light-a dim, but perfectly defined square of radiance-which, however, did not appear to illuminate anything around

"That's a house—it's a light in a win-dow," said the record voice.
"House nothing!" retorted the first speaker. "A house with a window on Galloper's kidge, fifteen miles from any-

where? You're crazy?'
Nevertheless from the muffled plunging and tinking that followed they seemed to be moving in the direction where the light had appeared. Then there was a pauce.

"There's nothing but a rocky outcrap here, where a house couldn't stand, and we're off the trail again," said the first

sepaker, impatiently. stop!-there it is again!" The same square of light appeared once

more, but the horsemen had evidently di-verged in the darkness, for its semed to be ma different direction. But it was more distinct, and as they gazed a shadow appeared upon its radiant surface-the outlined profile of a human face. Then the light suddenly went out and the face vanished "It is a window, and ther was some one

behind it," said the second speaker, emphintically. It was a woman's face," said the pleas-

Whoever it is, just hall them, so that we can get our bearings. Sing out. All

ant voice.

shout, in which, however, the distinguishing quality of the pleasant voice was sustained

but there was no response from the darkness beyond. The shooting was repeated after an interval, with the same result; the since and obscurity remained unchanged. "Let's get out of this," said the first speaker, angrity; "house or no bouse, man or woman; we're not wanted, and we'll nothing waltzing round here!" shi" said the second voice, "Ss-hi

The leaves of the nearest trees were trilling audibity. Then came a sudden gust that swept the fronds of the tailer ferus into their faces, and inid the thin, little whips of alder over their horses' flanks sharply. It was followed by the distant sea like roaring of the mountain side. "That's a little more like it," said the first speaker, joyfully. "Another blow like that and we're all right. Look!

There's a lightenin' up over the trail we There was indeed a faint glow in that di-There was indeed a faint glow in that of rection, like the first suffusion of dawn-permitting the large shoulder of the mountain, along whose flanks they had been journeying to be distinctly seen. The sodden breath of the stirred forest depths was slightly tainted with acrid fume.

"That's the match you threw away was sufficient to the stirred forest depths was slightly tainted with acrid fume.

"That's the match you threw away two hours ago," said the pleasant voice, deliberately. "It's caught the dry brush in the trail round the bend."

"Anyhow, hit's given us our bearings, hoys," said the first speaker, with satisfied accents. "We're all right now. And the wind's lifting the sky ahead there. Forward, now, all together, and let's get out of this hell-hole while we can."

It was so much lighter that the bulk of each horseman could be seen as they moved

each horseman could be seen as they moved forward together. But there was no ming of the obscurity on either side of Nevertheless the profile of the horseman with the pleasant voice seemed to be occasionally turned backward, and be suddenly checked his horse. "There's the window again," he said.

"Look -there! it's gone again!"
"Let it go," returned the leader, "come on." They sporred forward in silence. It was not long before the wayside trees began to dirally show spaces between them, and the ferns to give way to lower, thickset shrubs, which in turn yielded to a oss, with long, quiet intervals of netted and tangled grasses. The regu-ler fall of the horses' feet became a more rhythnic throbbing. Then suddenly a single hoof rang out sharply on stone, and

the first speaker reined in slightly. Thank the Lord, we're on the ridge now, and the rest is easy. Tell you what, though, boys, now we're all right, I don't mind saying that I didn't take no stock in that blamed corpse light down there. If there ever was a will-o'-the-wisp on a square-up mountain-that was one

an't no window. Some of ye thought anw a face, too, ch?"

want no window. Some of ye thought ye saw a face, too, ch?"

"Yes, and a rather pretty one," said the pleasant voice, meditatively.

"That's the way they'd belid that sort of thing, of course. It's lucky ye had to satisfy yourself with looking! Gorb! I feel creepy yit, thinking of it! What are you looking back for, now? Blamed if I don't think that face bewitched ye."

"I was only thinking about that fire you started," returned the other quietly. you started," returned the other quietly. "I don't see it now."

"Well, if you did?"
"I was wordering whether it could reach that hollow."
"I reckon that hollow could take care of any casual nat'rel fire that come be g, and go two better every time! Why, along and go two better every time. Way, along an all a piece of that infernal ignis fatuus phantusmagoriana that was played upon us down there!"

With the laughter that followed they

started forward again, relapsing into si-lence of tired men at the end of a fourney. Even their few renards were interiec-tional or seminiscent of topics whose fredi-ness had been exhausted with the day. The gaining light which seemed to come gaining light which seemed to come the ground about them rather than the still, overcast sky above, defined their individuality more distinctly. The

to be their leader, wore the virgin un-shaven beard, mustache, and flowing hair of the Californian pioneer, and might have been the eldest; the second speaker was close shaven, thin and energetic; the third with the pleasant voice, in height, litheness, and supponess of figure, appeared to be the youngest of the party. The trail had now become a grayish streak along the level tableland they were following, which also had the singular effect of appearing lighter than the surrounding landscape, ye of plunging into utter darkness on either aide of its precipitous wait. Nevertheless, at the end of an hour the leader rose in his siliraps with a sigh of suitsfaction. "There's the light in Collinson's Mill!

"There's the light in Collinson's Mill!
There's nothing gaudy and spectacular about
that, boys, ch? No, sir! it's a square,
honest beacon that a man can steer by
We'll be there in twenty minutes." He
was pointing into the darkness below the
aircady descending trail. Only a pioneer's
eye could have detected the rew pinpricks
or bent in the imponentable distance, and or light in the impenetrable distance, and it was a signal proof of his leadership that the others accepted it without seeing it. "It's just 10 o'clock." he continued, holding a huge silver watch to his eye: we've wasted an hour on those blamed wks youder!"

We weren't off the trail more than ten

"All right, my son; go down there if you like and fetch out your Witch of Endor, but as for me, I'm going to throw myself the other side of Collinson's lights. They're good enough for me, and a blamed sight more stationary."

The grade was very steep, but they took

The grade was very steep, but they took it. California fashion, at a gallop, being genninely good riders, and using their trains as well as their spors in the understanding of their horses, and of certain natural laws, which the more artificial riders of civilization are apt to overlook. Hence there was no hesitation or indecision communicated to the nervous creatures they bestrode, who swept over crumbling stones and slippery ledges with a momentum that took away half their weight, and made a stumble or false step, or indeed anything took away half their weight, and made a stumble or false step, or indeed anything but an actual collision, almost impos-sible. Closing together they avoided the latter, and holding each other well up, became one irresistible wedge-shaped mass. At times they yelled, not from conscious-ness nor bravado, but from the purely animal instinct of warning and to combat the bravillessman of their opening and the breatilessness of their descrit, until, reaching the level, they charged across the gravelly bed of a valished river, and pulled up at Collinson's Mill. The mill itself and beginned with the river, but the building that had once stood for it was used as a rude hostelry for travelers, which, however, hore no legend or invi-tatory sign. Those who wanted it linew it, those who passed it by veril mosflense. Collinson himself stood by the door smok-lers a contemplative nine. As they refer a ing a contemplative pipe. As they rode up the disengaged himself from the doorpost istlessly, walked slowly toward them, said reflectively to the leader, "Twe bern think-ing with you that a vote for Thoropson is a te thrown away," and prepared to lead e horses toward the water tunk. He id parted with them over twelve hours be-re, but his air of simply renewing a reently interrupted conversation was too emmon a circumstance to attract their otice. They knew and he knew that no one else had passed that way since he had last poxen; that the same sun had swing si-ically above him and the unchanged had-cape, and there had been no interruption

or diversion to his monotonous thought The wilderness annihilates time and space with the grim pathos of patience.

Nevertheless be smiled. "Ye don't seem
to have got through coming down yet." he
continued, as a few small borders,
loosened in their rapid descent, came more deliberately rolling and plunging after the travelers along the gravelly bottom. Then he turned away with the horses, and, after they were watered, he re-entered the house. His guests had evidently not waited for his ministration. They had already taken one or two bottles from the shelves behind a wide bar and helped themselves, and, glasses in hand, were now satisfy-ing the more immunent cravings of hunger with biscuits from a barret and slices of smoked herring from a box. Their equally singular host, accepting their conduct as not unusual, joined the circle they had comortably drawn round the fireplace, and neditatively kicking a brand back at the lire, said, without looking at them:

'Well!" returned the leader, leaning back in his chair, after carefully ing the buckle of his belt, but wit also on the fire. "Well! we pected every yard of outcrop Divide, and there am't the ghost of a silver on anywhere.

"Not a smell," added the close-shaven nest, without raising his eyes. They all remained silent, looking at the fire, as if it were the one thing they had taken into their confidence. Collinson addressed himself to the blaze as he presently: "Italias seemed to me that also addressed the said presently. "Italian seemed to me that there was something shiny about that ledge just round the shoulder of the spur, over

the long canon." The leader ejacolated a short laugh. The leader claiming within that a sign? "Shiny, eh? shiny! Ye think that a sign? Why, you might as well reckon that because Key's head, over thar, is gray and livery, that he's got sabe and experience. As he spoke he looked toward the man with as leasant voice. The fire shining full upon him revealed the singular fact that while his face was still young, and his mostache quite dark, his hair was perfeetly gray. The object of this attention, heine disconcerted by the compari-

son, added with a smile "Or that he had any silver in his pocket." Another lapse of silence followed. ind tore round the house and rumbled in the short adobe chimney.

No, gentlemen," said the leader reflectively, "this sort o' thing is played out. " I don't take no more stock in that cock-andball story about the lost Mexican mine. I don't eatch onto that Sunday school yarn about the pious, scientific Sharp who colected leaves and vegetables all over the Divide, all the while he knew the range was solid silver, only he wouldn't soil his fingers with God-forsaken fucre. I ain't saying anything agin that fine-spon the-ory that Key believes in about volcanic upheavals that set up on end argentiferous rock, but I simply say that I don't see it— with the naked eye. And I reckon it's about ne, boys, as the game's up, that we handed our checks and left the board."

There was another ellence around the There was asserted to the about the fire, another whiri and turmoil without. There was no attempt to combat the opinions of their leader, possibly the same sense of disappointed hopes was felt by all only they preferred to let the man of greater experience voice it. He went on:

"We've had our little game, boys, ever since we left Hawlin's a week ago; we've had our ups and downs; we ve been starved and parched, snowed up and half drowned. shot at by road agents and horse thieves, kicked by mules, and played with by grizzlies. We've had a heap of fun, boys, for our money, but I recken the plenic is aboutover. Sowe'llshake hands to morrow all round and call it square, and go on our ways separately."

"And what do you think you'll do Uncle ck?" said his close-shaven companion,

listicesly. "I'll make tracks for a square meal, a bed that a man could confortably take off his boots and die in, and some vicket-recented scap. Civilization's good erough for me! I even recken I wouldn't mind the sound of the church-going bell of there was a

theater handy, as there likely would be. But the wilderness is played out." "You'll be back to it again in six mostis, Uncle Dick," retorted the other quickly

Dick did not reply. It was a cultarity of the party that in their isolated companionship they had already exhausted discussion and argument. A silence followed, in which they millooked at the fire as if it was its turn to make a suggestion. "Collinson," said the pleasant voice abthe Divide, about two miles from the first spur above the big canyon?"
"Nary soul."

'Are you sure?"

come there lately?" persisted the pleasant

voice.
"I recken. It am't a week ago that I tramped the whole distance that you fellers just rode over."
"There ain't," said the leader, deliber-transportanted eastle or cabin that "There ain't," said the leader, denoer-ntely, "any enchanted castle or cabin that goes waltzing round the road with re-volving windows and fairy princesses looking out of 'em?"

But Collinson, recognizing this as purely trelevant humor, with possibly a trap or pitfall in it, moved away from the fire-

pittail in It, moved away from the fire-place without a word and retired to the adjoining kitchen to prepare supper. Pres-ently he reappeared.

"The pork bari's empty, boys, so I'll hev to fix ye up with jerked beef, potatoes, and flapjacks. Ye see, thar ain't anybody ben over from Skinner's store for a week."

"All restriction barrer or," said Inches

"All right, only hurry up," said Uncle Dick, cheerfully, settling himself back in his chair. "I reckon to tura in as soon as I've rastled with your hash, for I've got to turn out agin and be off at sun-up. They were all very quiet again, so quiet that they could not help noticing that the sound of Collinson's preparations for their supper had ceased too. Unde Dick nose softly and walked to the kitchen door. Collinson was sitting before a small kitchen stove, with a fork in his hand gazing abstracted by before him. At the sound abstractedly before him. At the sound of the guest's footsteps he started, and the Leaning toward the chair of the close-shaven man, he said in a lower voice:

"He was off agin."
"Thinkin' of that wife of his."
"What about his wife?" asked Key,
lowering his voice also.
The three Lien's heads were close to-

When Collinson fixed up this full he sent for his wife in the States, "said Uncle Dick, in a half whisper, "waited a year for her, hanging around and hoarding every enigrant wagon that came through the Pass. emgrant wagou that came inrough the ross. She didn't come—only the news that she was dead." He paused and nudged his chair still closer—the heads were almost touching. "They say—over in the bar," his voice had sunk to a complete whisper—'that it was a lie! That she ran away with the man that was fetchth' her out. Three thousand miles and three weeks. with the man that was fettam her out. Three thousand miles and three weeks with another man upsets some women. But he knows nothing about it, only he sometimes kinder goes off loony-like, thinkin' of her." He stopped; the heads keparated. Collinson had appeared at the

rated. Collision had appeared at the doorway, his nelancholy patience apparently unchanged.
"Grub's on gentlemen; sit by and cat."
The humble meal was dispatched with zest and silence. A few interjectional remarks about the uncertainties of programmers. pecting only accented the other pauses. In ten minutes they were out again by the freplace with their iit pipes. As there were only three chairs Collinson stood be-

side the chimney.
"Collinson," said Uncle Dick, after the "Collinson," said Uncle Dick, after the usual pause, taking his pipe from his lips, "as we'vegot to get up and get at sun-up, we might as well tell you now that we're dead broke. We've been living for the last few weeks on Prebla Key's koone chinige—and that's gone. You'll have to let this little necount and damage stand over."

Collinson's how signify contracted, without, however, aftering his general expression of resiened mathence.

sion of resigned patience.
"I'm sorry for you, boys," he said, slowly,
"and"—diffidently—"kinder sorry for myand diffuently gader sorry for myself, too. You see, I recknoted on going over
to Skinner's to-morrow to fill up the pork
bar land vote for Mesick and the wag our out.
But Skinner can't let me have anything more
until I've paid suthin' on account, as he 'D've mean to say thar's any mountain

gently; "you see they won't send him goods from Sacramento if he don't pay up, and he can't if I don't. Sabe:"
"Ah! that savother thing. They are mean —in Sacramento," said Uncle Dick, some-what mollified.

The other guests murmured an assent to

this generous proposition. Suddenly Uncle Dick's face brightened. "Look here! I know Skinner, and I'll stop there. No, blank it all! I can't, for it's off my route! Well, then, we'll fix it this my routel wen, then, wen lik it this way. Key will go there and tell Skinner that I say that I'll sand the money to that Sacramento bound. That'll fix it!"
Collinson's brow cleared: the solution of the difficulty seemed to satisfy everybody, and the close-slaven man smiled.
"And I'll secure it," he said, "and give Collinson a sight draft on myself at San Francisco."

What's that for said Collinson, with sudden saffusion on each chees.
"In case of accident." Persisted Collinson

Wot accident? persisted Collinson, this density gentleman of the standing deside his empty park said the seleval are than with a laugh.

"In case we should forget is," said the barrel, had scattered to the four winds. (To be continued.) with a dark look of suspicion on his usually

"And do you suppose that if you boys went and forgot it that I'd have anything o do with your paper?" said Collinson, a mrky cloud coming into his eyes. "Why, that's only business, Colly," interposed Uncle Dick quickly, "that Jim Parker means, he's a business

don't you see? Suppose we got killed! You've that draft to show."

You've that draft to show."

"Show who." growled Collinson.
"Why-hang it-our friends, our heirs, our relations—to get your money," hesitated Uncle Dick.

"And do you kalkilate," said Collinson, with deeply laboring breath, "that if you got killed, that I'd be coming on your folks. for the worth of the truck I giv ye? away! Lemme git out o' this. Yo makin' me tired." He staked to the o lit his pipe, and began to walk up and down the gravelly river bed. Uncle Dick followed him. From time to time the two other guests heard the sounds of alternate pro-tests and explanation as they passed and repassed the windows. Preble Key smiled,

Parker shrugged his shoulders.

"He'll be thinkin' you'v begrudged him you grub if you don't—that the way with these business men," said Uncle Dick's voice in one of these intervals. Fresently they re-entered the house, Uncle Dick saying casually to Parker: "You can leave that draft on the bar when you're ready to go to-morrow," and the incident was preto-morrow," and the incident was pre-sumed to have been ended. But Collinson did not glance in the direction of Parker for the rest of the evening, and, indeed, standing with his back to the chimney, more than once fell into that stelld abstraction

which was supposed to be the contempla-ion of his absent wife.

From this silence, which became infections, the three guests were suddenly aroused by a forious cambering down the steep descent of the mountain—along the trail they had just ridden! It came near, increasing in sound, until it even seemed to scatter the fine gravel of the river bed against the sides of the house, and then passed in a gust of wind that shock the roof and roared in the chimney. With one common impulse the three travelers rose and went to the door. They opened it to a blackness that seemed to stand as another and an iron door before

them. But to nothing else. "Somebody went by then," said Uncle ick, turning to Collinson. "Didn't you "Nary," said Collinson, patiently, with

out moving from the chimney. "What in God's name was it, then?" - "Only some of them boulders you loosed coming down. It's touch and go with them for days after. When I first came here I used to start up and rush out into the road-like as you would-yellin' and spreechin' after folks that never was there and never went by. Then it got kinder monotonous, and I'd he still and let 'em side. Why, one night I'd a sworn that some one pulled up with a yell and shock the door. But I sort of allowed to myself that whatever it was, it wasn't wantin' to out moving from the chimney that whatever it was, it wasn't wantin' to eat, drink, sleep, or it would come in-and I hadn't any call to interfere. And in the mornin' I found a rock as big as that box lying chock a block agin the Goor. Then I'd knowed I was right.

Preble Key remained looking from the foor.
"There's a glow is the sky over Big Canon," he said with a meaning glance at

Uncle Dick.
"Saw it an hour ago," said Coffinson "It must be the woods aftre just around the bend above the canon. Whoever goes to Skinner's had better give it a wide

berth."

Key turned toward Collinson, as if to speak, but apparently changed his mind, and presently joined his companions, who were strendy rolling themselves in their blankets, in a series of wooden binks or "Sartia. That ain't no one but me betwixt Bald Top and Skinner's—twenty-five miles."

"Of course you'd know if any one had mill. Collinson disappeared—no one knaw The Great Military Strike

The king of Eldunnovehr had declared war against his powerful rival, the monarch of Seldomphoundland. The localities are slightly mythical, I will freely admit, the period is modern—"fin-de-siecleish," indeed, but still, alas, the ancient and bar lingderkness that haden compassed the house all the evening began to slowly creep in through every chink and cranny of the rambling ill-jointed structure, until it at last obliterated even the faint embers on the hearth. The cool fragrance of the woodbarous practice of war was not yet obso lete in these happy countries, and my Lords Bertram and Cottondyke and other warlike chiefs were holding a solemn conclave as to ways and means for the forthcoming expedition.

By a single stroke of the pen thousands

of men were to be thrown here, there and everywhere. Human beings to be torn no more concern than if they had been chessmen in a gigantic game played by their chiefs at home. And all for what? of the precious blood spilled in its defense Certainly Eidunnewehr was a free coun

"A pacific who?" asked Gen. Cottondyke with more incredulity than grammatical ac

"Patriot, my lord. Patriots are usually remarkable for shedding blood. In justice to these excellent men, it must be admitted that they are indifferent as to whether the blood be their own or other people's. My mission, on the other hand, is to prevent ploodshed, and in the name of hu beg of you now, on the eve of this war, to

"Ah! strike while the iron is hot. Jus what we are going to do," said Gen. Bertram.

"Not so, but strike yourselves." "An unnecessary and painful proceed ing," remarked Gen. Cottondyke, "which, if attended with fatal consequences, would certainly lead to verdicts of sulcide while of unsound mind."

"You misunderstand me. I mean that wish the conditions of their labor to be settered. You must politely but peremp torily decline to go out to battle It cannot be. It is our duty to fight and

our honor is involved." "Duty! Honor! Bab, gentlemen! Thes are the most vilely prostituted of terms. Can it be any Christian's duty to slay his fellow men-for I suppose you are Chris

suggestion that they might not be, although of a truth no soldler can be a true Christian. "Now, I ask you, gentlemen," Philadel phocontinued, "are you fond of danger;" And they all replied in chorus: "We freely admit that we entertain no

personal affection for danger, and, our lives being precious, we usually prefer to see others bear the brunt of peril." Then must it not be all the easier fo you to decline the performance of a duty

which is unpleasant to you?" "Permit me to remark," said Cottondyke thut this is all nonsense. The country's reputation is at stake. If we are not pre-

ared the enemy will-"
"Never mind the enemy. Leave him to me. Leave him to me, thank you. There ts no dispute under the sun that cannot be arranged by arbitration. Oh, my lord, 'Put up thy sword. He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword. With all reverence I quote these words. Two thou sand years have passed since they were spoken and how miserably have the pre-tended followers forgotten their Divine Master's precepts. Once more, gentlemen I beseech you to join in a universal military

strike." You would, then, put an end to the army

It is certainly more ornament than use, besides being so very expensive to the poor taxpayer. It may yet be possible for the working classes to find more remunerative employment than as common soldiers. And as for you, you do not do this sort of thing exactly for a living, I pre-

"Gentlemen," said Cottondyke, decisively. "Mr. Philadelpho has spoken truly. I desire to cast no aspersion upon the royal knowledge of arithmetic."

I have no doubt you mean well, sir, said Bertram; "but you waste your time. You have not considered the stigma which would rest upon officers who drew back on the eve of battle."

'A purely military stigma, not a moral one; so, if you all strike, who is there left to stigmatize?' Then they began to think, and all

chorus echoed: "Who, indeed?"
"I have seen others and they conse those beneath you and those above. The duke of Granta agrees to strike.' "If our noble chief agrees to strike. said Cottondyke, "it is our duty to do so,

And they all echoed: "It is our duty!" "But the prince, the heir apparent?" interposed Bertram.

"The prince,' said the patriot, "does not go personally into action, although he is a general. He fights vicariously. He. therefore, does not count. I say the prince does not-nay, cannot

ount. We will strike!" And the chorus of officers repeated: We will!"

Philadelpho had set himself a high ideal, but he knew he must reckon with humanity on its own level; not too lofty a "real." When he told the generals he had obtained the acquiescence both of their inferiors and superiors, he told a

lie-a lie surely as white as snow. He knew that men's chief instinct is, sheeplike, to go with the common herd. he gained his point and instigated the great military strike.

II. On the morrow the troops were to start They were to be inspected by the king, who see them off at the port of en kation.

Peter IX of Eidunnovehr was a good sort of fellow enough as kings go, which is not saying too much in his favor. He did all things vicariously, through agents and officers, even to the payment of his household expenses, which were defrayed for him by the broad-backed taxpayer It is quite a wonder he did not eat his meals through the mouth of some high court official kept for that purpose. As an instance of how far this sort of thing can be carried, it is only necessary to cite the well-known case of the youthful monarch for whose behoof a whipping boy was kept to receive the flagellations which under ordinary circumstances would have fallen to the august individ-ual's lot. Thus it was that Peter merely wished his arm; godspeed, and went out to conquer and win giory vicamously, for his life was precious, kings being few and the

people many. The troops were drawn up in martial array, and Peter, supported by his son, the heir-apparent, sat upon his noble charg er, who had never charged any one, except the nation. The monarch was beginning to marvel why soldiers and officers alike stood so calm and impassive, making no attemt to start upon their march, when a group of generals, headed by the commander-in-chief, the Duke of Granta. same leisurely up to him.

"Your majesty," said the latter, who had been chosen spokesman, "it is my duty to tell you that we, the whole army, have decided to strike-

"A blow for victory," suggested Peter "Not so, sire. Our true duty has been pointed out to us by a humanitarian and pacific patriot, and we have resolved, po-

itely but firmly, not to go out to the The king started back aghast and his steed neighed disapproval. "Hal" exclaimed the former. "This is

All the strikers shall go to prison and be tried by court-martial!" A long, melodious, scornful laugh broke from the entire army, and the duke spoke

reason! No, stay; the term is obsolete

agravis: "Your majesty must permit me to comment upon the absurdity of that remark There is no one to imprison us but yourself, and as you are used to doing things vicariously I don't think you'd be able to manage us all. The only alternative, then, is to walk ourselves into jail and hold court martials upon ourselves-an idea so com plicated as to require the mind of a William Schwenk Gilbert to grasp it."

"But where are the police, my faithful myrmidous, whose number is whose name is Robert?"

They are not supposed to interfere in purely military disputes. Their sympathic are with us. The people are with us. Be sides, if you put us in prison we can't fight at the same time, so t comes to the sam thing." "Would a slight rise in pay do?" Peter

suggested feebly. "Bay a penny a week all round?" "No, it would not do. You forget that you pay them vicariously, and the taxpayer

says he won't have it settled that way. We have asked him. He won't have his best blood shed for visionary quarrels abroad that he doesn't half understand and doesn't want to. He'll welcome us on the native soil to defend our own homes should the be attacked. He wants peace perpetual neither more nor less."
"Great heavens! Then to resort to

miliar colloquialism, I am cornered'!"
"Yes, I think we may fairly be said to ave placed your majesty in the apex of an august rectangle."

So the whole army marched in due order back to the various barracks, and King Peter rode home to his palace, sad and thoughtful, for it seemed that troubles and difficulties were gathering thick and fast

Peter knew he should get into trouble on reaching home. First there was the queen to face, who, like all ladies, knew how it would be. She wished she had been there; she'd have managed them, Duke of Granta and all the rest. Strike, in deed! She'd have given them strike in a way they didn't bargain for. Then there was Gomcellor, the prime minister, a gen tieman of remarkable firmnessnacy his opponents called it—who was pop-ularly supposed to he the people's idol, although the people themselves were divided upon this point, but who had made more han one grave blunder in his time, as was owned even by the newspapers which professed adherence to his political views. Even this astute statesman was nonpluse ed by the present turn of events.

A universal military strike was some thing without parallel in the world's his

War was declared, but there were no means of carrying it on. The matter was urgent, so a privy council was convened for that very night, at which the king, Gomcellor, and Lillyborn, the foreign minis-ter, were present, and even Granta was summoned to give his advice,
"The circumstances," said Gomcello

"are so unprecedented that had I heard them from less august and veracious lips I should not hesitate in declaring that they came within measureable distance of the highly improbable. My mind is, therefore, a blank on the subject, capable, however, of receiving ideas and forming views. I think I would suggest a royal commission to inquire at full length into the cause-"Life is too short for royal commisstons." said the practical Lillyborn. must act this time-for a change. Here are the facts: We have no army and can-

domphoundland, whose palace is replete with every modern luxury, cannot be without that commodity. He must be asked to name it. Our position must not be shown up too plainly, but we must resort to arbi-tration without loss of prestige. Your majesty is personally acquainted with his

"Yes, rather," Peter answered. "Ha one of the best billiard players I ever

"Then your best plan would be to go

and see him and arrange matters. You will do so?" "Certainly-vicariously, of course. You

would represent me, Lillyborn?"
"I think your Majesty had better go yourself this time."

"But I have not been med-I-there might be danger?"

"You don't think of that when you send us," said Granta. "I don't speak for my self, because I always take jolly good care to keep out of too great peril, but for those under me, whose part I am taking by way of a change. Send on a fing of truce first-a table cloth or clean pocket handkerchief will do. Be sure it is a clean one or the enemy may doubt your intentions. A table cloth or handkerchief is an emblem of pence which no true soldier would willingly treat

with disrespect."
So Peter was finally prevailed upon to pay an amionisle visit to Seldomphoundland, a step which, it must be confessed, the worthy monarch took all the more readily from entertaining hopes of august "larks" at the foreign court, when far from the reach of conjugal supervision. IV.

The progress of Peter through the do-ninions of Gobo XIX, of Seidemphoundland, was a pleasant one enough, the for-mer monarch being accommodated with Pullman cars, sumptuous repasts, light-literature and other demonstrations of

friendship and good will. He noted, however, that no warlike preparations were to be seen here any more than in his own country. This made him suspect treachery, and he began to fear lest his white handkerchief should not have met with that respect which he had been assured that this useful article would necessarily Inspire. But all these fears were soon dispelled by the genial and hearty reception which he met with at the hands of his old friend Gobo XIX.

"I am delighted to see you, Peter,"
the latter exclaimed, shaking him by the "Happy to meet you once more, dear

brother. You received my envoy, of course?" "Yes, although his flag was red by the time he got here."
"Red! Good heavens! Why, the Queen herself got out a clean--"
"Well, it seems be lost that one on his

way, and at the village where he missed it there were only colored hazzicrechiefs sold, so he had to purchase a red one. But when he explained this we know what you meant, so it came to the same thing. And

meant, so it came to the same time and now will you tell me what has promed us the honor of your brotherly visit?" ! "Well, to come to business without one necessary premishe, the fact is that I' wished to see if we could not settle our differences by friendly arbitration instead of by war."
"My dear Peter, I am pleased. It is the

very thing I wanted to propose myself,"
"You-so warlike and bold!" "I was warlike and bold, like you, vicas riously, but that is all past now." "May I ask why this remarkable

"May I not have the distinguished hency of putting the same-query first to you?" a "Well, we thought-I mean, i-vicariously-that for two such great mations as ours to come to blows was setting a bad example to the rest of mankind and calculated to upset the even balance and soldarity of the world's polity, and that the same results might be obtained by mutual conressions of such a nature as to insure 3

"Gammen, my dear brother; in the concise philosophy of Bacon, I repeat, ems phatically but respectfully, gnomen. A truce to diplomacy. We pay others to be our diplomats. Why keep a dog nod bark, yourself? I will tell the truth instead. I may as well, for it is common talk at our court, and you would soon hear it for yours seif. We are having a universal military

"How singulari"

"A pacific patriot?" "The same. Do you know him?"
"Of course. He has been serving my army in the same striking manner. "Then we are on a perfect equality,"

And the two kings shook hands.
"We are, and the only thing remaining is for our foreign ministers to meet and talk over the terms." This time the worthy monarchs eme, braced, and that evening, as they sat by the palatial hearth, drinking imperial To-

kay, while Peter the Younger flirted ass siduously with the Princess of phoundland, in the embrasure of the mulls oned window, the King of Eldunnovehr began to think that after all peace was bets ter than war. And fervently do we pray that all internsa

tional disputes may be as easily arranged, and that war, which has been the bitteress of all curses in the ages past and gone, may forever be abolished in the better years to (Copyright, 1895, by L. E. H. Stephens.)

Only a Transfer Ticket. "Smith," a well known Treasury of ficial, had a little experience a few evenings ago at the Fifteenth street transfer station, a repetition of which, he says, would convert him into a gibbering lillot.

way to his Twenty-first street residence. Alighting from an orange-colored Four teenth street car at the junction he hastily, procured a transfer slip from the caged He had reached the center of the street again when another north bound cable train rolled up and Smith mechanically

He had been down town and was on his

poarded it. Then it was that Smith res membered he had left his gold-headed cane somewhere. So engrossed was he with the thought that his surroundings were forgotten until the conductor rudely aroused him from the introspection by a rough punch on the shoulder. The little yellow slip of cardboard was handed over to the

blue-coated monarch and Smith looked about him. "Where am I?" he ejaculated,

? "On Fourteenth street," answered the surprised conductor. Snatching the transfer slip from the other's hand the official scrambled from the moving car and walked back three squares to the railway intersection, where e found a Georgetswn car. With a sight of relief he sank into a forward seat. After a while the conductor came around and

was given the slip.
"Wrong transfer, sir," yelled the conductor. "It's for a Fourteenth street car, sir. Some mis-"

The yellow pasteboard was quickly scree tinized by the gentleman, and then wit a gesture of congrin and disgust he threw, it into the outer air. His hands found their way into pockets in a vain quest of change. He had none. A stranger politely offered to make & 5-cent loan but the kindness was declined;

and Smith, with a countenance as red as a lobster's buck, dropped from the car-to walk home, muttering dire vengeanco against fortune, cable systems and transfer agents.

not make war We may make perpetual peace the fashion in time. The nations want peace; let them pay for it. Every man in the world has his price. That is an action of diplomacy. The King of Sel--Life

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

and depths crept in with it until the steep of human warmth, the reek of human cloth-ing, and the lingering odors of stale human victual were swept away in that incor-ruptible and omnipotent breath. An hour later and the wilderness had repossessed itself of all. from children, wives and mothers—to be mardered, maimed, or imprisoned, with Key, the lightest sleeper, awoke early, Ah, great heavens! What cause, since the world began, has been worth a drop try, wherein no man was forced to become a soldier against his will, but even that did not justify or atone for the iniquity of Suddenly the generals' conference was interrupted by the unannounced entrance of a stranger. With military unanimity these gentlemen rose and inquired:
"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" "Pardon me, but my business is so urgent and my time so short that I could not stand on ceremony. Permit me to introduce my-self. My name is Philadelpho, and I am a pacific patriot."

half intoxicated him, The abandoned mill stretched beside

the summits and fail in slow tenes, itself larg calaracts, down the mountain side. Only the range before the ledge was clear; there the green places seemed to swell onward and upward in long mounting billows, until at last they broke against the sky.

In the keen stimulous of the hour and the

for his last meal. It was not anth he had finished his coffee and Collinson had brought up his horse that a slight sense of shame at his own and his courades' selfishness embarrassed his parting with his patient host. He himself was going to Skinner's to plead for him. Heknew that Parker had left the draft—he had seen it lying in the left the draft—he had seen it lying in the bar—but a new some of delicacy kept him from alluding to it new. It was better to leave him with his own peculiar ideas of the responsibilities of hospitality unchanged. He shook his hand warmly and gailoped up the rolly slope. But when he had finally reached the highr level and funcied he could even now see the dust raised by his departing comrades on their two diversing paths, although he knew that they had already gone their different ways, perhaps never to meet again, his thoughs and his cres reverted only to the ruined

perhaps never to meet again, his thoughts and his eyes reverted only to the ruined mill below him and its lonely occupant. He could see him quite distinctly in that clear air still standing before his door. And then be appeared to make a parting gesture with his hand, and something like snow fluitered in the air above his head. It was only the tern fragments of Parker's

Pussy Swam to Her Kittens. Albert Stetson, who has been superin-

cabin.—San Francisco Examiner. A Daughter's Cruel Joke. young lady handed the letter to her mother to read the house became so still that one

could hear the grass growing in the back

yard.-Wilkesbarre Eventog Leader.

where they have quarters in the captain's

so early that the dawn announced itself only in two d.n squares of light that seemed to grow out of the darkness at seemed to grow out of the darkness at the end of the room where the windows looked out upon the valley. This reminded him of his woodland vision of the night before, and he lay and watched them until they brightened and began to outline the figures of his still sleeping companions. But there were faint stirrings elsewhere—the soft brushing of a squirrel across the shingled roof, the thy flutter of invisible wings in the rafters, the "peep" and "squeak" of baby life below the floor. And then he fell into a deeper sleep, and awoke only when it deeper sleep, and awoke only when it

was broad day.

The sun was shining upon the empty bunks; his companions were already up and gone. They had separated as the had come together-with the light-hearted irresponsibility of animals-without reirresponsibility of animals—without regret, and scarcely reminiscence; bearing with cheerful philosophy and the hopefulness of a future unfettered by their past the final disappointment of their quest. If they ever met again they would hungs and remember; if they did not, they would forget without a sigh. He hurriedly dressed himself and went outside to dip his face and hands in the bucket that stood beside the door; but the clear air, the dazzing sunshine, and the unexpected prospect half intoxicated him.

him in all the pathos of its premature decay. The ribs of the water-wheel ap-peared and a tangle of shrubs and drift-wood, and were twined with long grasses and strangling vines; mounds of sawdust and hoaps of "brush" had taken spon and heaps of forms had taken upon themselves a velvety moss where the trickling silms of the vanished river lost itself in singrish pools, discolored with the dres of redwood. But on the other side of the rocky ledge dropped the whole side of the rocky ledge dropped the whole length of the valley, alternately hathed in sunshine or hidden in drifts of white nud clinging smoke. The upper end of the long canon, and the crests of the ridge above him, were lost in this fleecy cloud, which at times seemed to overflow the summits and fall in slow lengs, like

ar Key felt the modantaleer's longing for netion, and scarcer noticed that Collin-son had pathetically brought out his pork barret to scrape together a few remnants for his last meal. It was not until he had

tending the unloading of the Washtenaw, is telling cat stories along the water front. On the steamer Saturn there was for a long time a black cat that was the pet of the stamen. When the Saturn was last in port she went every day to the dock, where she had installed a litter of kittens among the freight. The Saturn left the dock a few days ago on the way to Liverpool, the mother on heard. The kittons were on the wharf. The steamer got about two hundred yards away from the pier, when the mother realized that a parting was taking place, and that her kittens would be left to starve if she did not do something. So she sprang into the cold waters and swam back to the wharf, She climbed up a pile, dripping wet, and dashed for her babtes. The freight clerks ook her and her kittens to the Washfenaw,

A story is being told of a young lady who found a package of love letters that had been written to her mother by her father before they were married. The daughter saw that she could have a little sport, and read them to her mother, substituting her own name for that of her mother and a fine young man for that of her father. The mother jumped up and down in her chair, shifted her feet and seemed terribly disgusted, and forbade her daughter to have anything to do with the young man who would write such sickening and nonsensical stuff to a girl. When the